

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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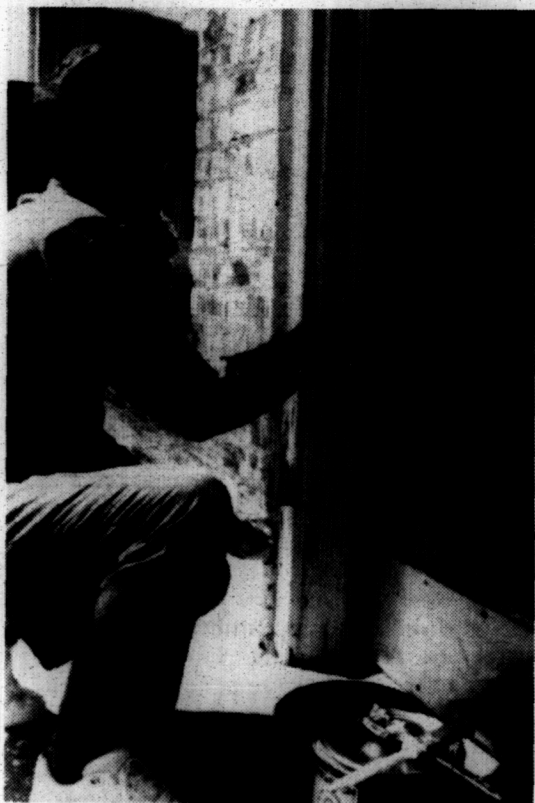
Aberdeen church gives bus station, passengers new life

By Shannon T. Simpson

Members of First Church, Aberdeen, have taken the term "community revitalization" to heart. Unlike the standard meaning of the phrase, their idea of community revitalization includes new life in Christ.

Church members with witnessing tracts in their pockets recently began working to "spruce up" the local bus station.

On June 10, 1995, Adults on Mission of First Church, Aberdeen, took scrapers in hand to make the first dent in the five coats of paint accumulated on the 1930s-era structure. After several sessions with power washers, donated by the local Sherwin-Williams and Lann Hardware stores, the building's owners sent carpenters to repair trimwork.



Ruby Herndon applies a coat of bright red paint to the front door of the Aberdeen bus station. (Photos by Shannon T. Simpson)



Paul Matthews, pastor of First Church, Aberdeen, chats with bus station manager Maurine Mize during a break in labor. Said Mize of the renovation: "I think it's just grand. I'm so happy about all this, words just can't express."

On March 16, First Church volunteers finished scraping and were ready to paint around windows, doors, and eaves.

The project is the brainchild of Linda Davis, Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) leadership team member and churchwide missions coordinator. She is the wife of Bill Davis, First Church's minister of music and education.

"The Lord just put this place on my heart as I drove by here one day about two and a half years ago," Linda said. "That's a place of ministry," the Lord was almost telling me. After all, he's in the business of mending things — making rubble into cathedrals."

Two buses come through the Greyhound depot daily — one northbound, one southbound. Station manager Maurine Mize estimated about 10 people per week get on or off one of those 14 buses in downtown Aberdeen.

Linda has befriended bus driver George Keys of Jackson, Tenn. She put together a

"travel bag" of snacks and candy — and a New Testament — and gave it to him during his brief stop March 16.

The bag is similar to the church's "Love Kits," another church project which goes into the hands of Aberdeen police officers, firemen, and other community servants.

Immediate plans for the bus station include washing blinds and curtains, and placing a Chamber of Commerce display rack inside. The rack will hold information about Aberdeen's attractions alongside Bibles and witnessing tracts.

"This (effort) is for the town of Aberdeen," said Linda. "The whole thrust of our ministry is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and bring people into relationship with him. What better place to do that than in your own town?"

An ongoing bus station ministry is listed in the church's WMU yearbook as a specific objective in reaching the goal of involving the entire church family in missions.

"We are hoping once we get the bus station... painted, and some shrubbery planted in the back, that we can get church members... to greet the passengers as they get off the bus, and maybe serve some coffee," said Elizabeth Curlee, First Church's WMU director.

Emphasis on churchwide missions involvement comes out of new study materials for Adults on Mission, the co-ed organization for adults introduced in October 1995 by the national WMU in Birmingham, Ala.

"We are really



Allen Morgan, 13, passed the Aberdeen bus station on his way home. When he saw fellow church members working, he asked, "Can I help?"



Bill Davis, minister of music and education at First Church, Aberdeen, perches precariously on a ladder to reach gable trim on the town's bus station. Volunteers returned to the project the following week to wrap up the trim work.

trying to think of ways to involve the whole church," Curlee added, "especially the men. We thought the bus station renovation and the SMARTeams might give them an outlet to minister. Through (these projects) we really can reach out not only to church members who need help, but to others in the community."

SMARTeams (small maintenance and repair teams) target "household and spiritual needs of widows, widowers, homebound, and needy," according to the church's WMU yearbook.

"In the last year, it has really sunk in that missions — undergirded by prayer — is not just for WMU, but for everyone," said Linda Davis.

Cyberchurching

Some churches are "surfin' the Net" in a big way, using the worldwide Internet computer network to reach the lost for Christ. "People on-line seem to fit the mold of the typical searcher who may believe some Christianity, some of the psycho-theory spirituality, some New Age, some ancient wisdom, and so forth," said Jeryl Hoover, pastor of Tarrytown Church in Austin, Texas. "The good thing is that more and more people are wanting to discuss religion intelligently. (The Internet) is a God-given opportunity for those of us who want to engage these folks," he stressed. Tarrytown Church, which went on-line about five months ago, has had over 1,000 visitors to its Internet home page. Hoover acknowledged that only 12% of American households currently have access to the Internet, but he said the church wanted to get in on the ground floor of this exploding communications technology. "We hope it will be a good tool for positioning the church in people's minds. We hope they will see the forum as a place where they can get straight answers to their questions," he said.

Preaching politics

As far as lists go, the one for pastor-politician must be short, indeed. That doesn't seem to bother Woodson McGuffee, who simultaneously serves as pastor of 320-member Forest Hill Church and mayor of the 500-resident Louisiana village of the same name. He explained that he picked up the political bug while serving at another Louisiana church in 1983. "A group of men were talking over morning coffee at the cafe when one of them said, 'I've never seen a preacher that could manage anything, or was worth a dime. That's why they have to move all the time.' Right then I made up my mind to run (for mayor)," he said. He received over 66% of the vote. When he accepted the call to Forest Hill Church, the bug bit him again and he won the mayoral race by a 2-1 majority. Careful not to mix church-state matters in his official capacity, McGuffee recalls many times when people came to the mayor's office in the midst of a crisis and went away with something more than political advice. "I have had the privilege of leading many people to the Lord in this office," he said.

Looking Back...

10 years ago

Pat White of Jackson is elected president of the newly-formed Mississippi Baptist Nursing Fellowship. The Mississippi Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship plans to honor the nurses' group during the fellowship's annual meeting in May.

20 years ago

Karol Leigh and Kristi Lynn Merritt arrive as the first twins born in the new Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson. The girls were welcomed by two older siblings, who were both born in the old Baptist Hospital facility across the street.

50 years ago

The Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union schedules its first annual meeting since the American entry into World War II in 1941, with about 1,500 women expected to attend the two-day meeting at First Church, Jackson.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

The making of a president

There will be little chance of a slip-up in electing the president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) this year at the annual meeting in New Orleans.

Two years ago a group of SBC leaders had put their stamp of approval on Fred Wolfe of Mobile to be the incoming president. He was a natural. He had been active in SBC politics for several years and could be counted on to continue the fundamental/conservative resurgence. They lined him up to be the last speaker on the program of the Monday night pastor's conference prior to the beginning of the convention. The gavel would be handed to him the next day.

Meanwhile Jack Graham of Dallas and some of the "young guard" of the SBC nominated Jim Henry of Orlando. Then the Executive Committee voted to no longer receive funds from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

(CBF). President Ed Young called for healing — a pious word that has been used by many SBC presidents — meaning we've got to stick together.

Jim Henry was elected and some changes were made; the SBC has greatly benefited from his strong leadership. The SBC group wisely bit their lip and awaited another day.

They met this spring in Atlanta. A week later Fred Wolfe announced he would nominate Tom Elliff of Del City, Okla., as SBC president. Jack Graham immediately seconded the nomination. The old guard and the young guard were together. Tom Elliff would be the front runner in the New Orleans convention.

Now we read that Tom Elliff will be campaigning in eight cities in Mississippi, April 1-2.

Why? He is a shoo-in for election. Nothing is known about who

set up Elliff's trip to Mississippi, or who is paying the travel expenses. Is it being orchestrated from outside the state? Elliff will be as good a president as any of those elected since 1978.

Mississippi Baptists support the SBC and have an admirable giving record. We are usually near the top in per capita giving in missions. For some of the fundamental/conservatives, this is not enough. They want full control. State conventions and state papers have been the two entities the SBC leadership has found difficult in their bid to take over.

So, welcome to Mississippi, Pastor Tom Elliff. Most of our people are conservative in theology and back the mission programs of the SBC. We support the Cooperative Program. We also, for the most part, have little use for SBC political games which can be detrimental to our main purpose.



**"BUT DAD, IF GOD TELLS YOU
WHAT TO SAY IN YOUR SERMON,
WHY ARE YOU THROWING SO MUCH AWAY?"**

First person...

"I just want to go home," runaway Valerie told Beachreacher

By Joni B. Hannigan

PANAMA CITY BEACH, Fla. (BP) — "I just want to go home and start over," Valerie sobbed. She rocked with her head between her knees, trying to avoid her boyfriend's pleas to get away from the people who had just offered her sanctuary and a way home.

As campus minister at Indiana University, I was part of the team of leaders participating in the "Beachreach" project at Panama City Beach, Fla., during spring break, March 9-14. Our project was a pilot for several other "Crossquest" experiences offered to college students through the Baptist Sunday School Board's National Student Ministries Department.

I had come to a Beachreach pancake breakfast being served to the public, and was asked to intervene in a situation which had begun the night before. Valerie, her "skin-

head" boyfriend, and two other males had met a group of Beachreach students. The students introduced themselves and invited the foursome to breakfast the next morning.

Warm pancakes and frosty orange juice satisfied their hunger, but Valerie said she listened when William, a student from Alabama, began to read a Scripture verse, Romans 6:23, to her.

Praying to "ask Jesus come into my heart," Valerie later said she felt instantly at peace, "and not the kind that you just put on your face, but the kind that is right here," she explained, pointing toward her heart.

Like the prodigal, she had left home six months before, but along the way began to miss "mommy" and a way of life that began and ended with two caring parents and a

secure home.

Valerie said her family moved from Kissimmee, Fla., to the Atlanta area a decade ago for her father's job. Finding Atlanta a big place, missing her childhood friends, Valerie said she went through a series of disappointments in trying to "fit-in" to her new surroundings.

An explosive relationship with an older brother and emotional disorders complicated by learning disorders finally led to increasing problems at home. At age 14, Valerie began to experiment with marijuana, acid, and speed.

Valerie is now 18. She said she feels she has missed out on her "childhood" and has been traumatized by experiences in drug rehabilitation centers and at school.

Valerie initially moved out of her family home and in with her newly-married older sister about six months ago. Then three months ago when that relationship turned sour, Valerie said she finally moved out onto the streets with her boyfriend.

"I want my family to know I'm different. I don't know if I can trust myself, and I don't know if they can trust me, but I just want to start over again," she cried.

Breaking up the relationship with her boyfriend is hard, Valerie admitted. Just a few weeks earlier, she and her boyfriend met two other young men at a Waffle House in Atlanta and decided to take a Greyhound bus south.

Describing her boyfriend as gentle "most of the time," Valerie said

he is very jealous and violent when she speaks with other people, and he doesn't like to see her enjoy herself.

This was obvious at the pancake breakfast that morning. After asking Valerie if she wanted to leave, we were walking to the car when her boyfriend came after us, knocking over chairs, yelling, and cursing.

Still sobbing quietly, Valerie sat in the backseat of the car, clutching the hands of two students involved in her discussion to return home.

Later, the change that had taken place inside was reflected in Valerie's appearance. A slim, attractive young woman dressed in a borrowed sweatshirt and matching shorts had emerged. "It feels good to dress like a girl again," she said.

Meanwhile, the local authorities, in cooperation with a pastor, had completed a background check on Valerie, which proved consistent with the information she had given us. Eighteen years old, she was from Norcross, Ga., and had no criminal record.

Initially, Valerie had been offered a ride to Atlanta with Jaime, Baptist Student Union president at Carson-Newman College in Tennessee. Later it was decided it would be best to contact Valerie's parents first.

There at the pay phone, I asked God to intervene. I prayed that Valerie's parents would accept her and welcome her home.

The response of her mother, Christine, couldn't have been more gratifying. "Oh, thank God she's

OK," she cried into the phone.

I asked if they wanted Valerie to be back home. "Of course, we never kicked her out in the first place — she left," Christine said.

We made arrangements to keep Valerie busy until her parents would arrive from Atlanta to pick her up and take her home.

Busy on the beach building sand-castles, Valerie was rested and lively. "Now I know I can have fun without drugs," Valerie said.

Glimpsing a car hesitating in the parking lot, I flagged it down and was excited to see Georgia license plates. Leading them to our room, I hesitated long enough to express my appreciation that they'd come to get her.

Sound asleep and curled up in a little ball with a special off-white afghan spread over her, Valerie's sun-kissed cheeks told of her last day in Panama City Beach.

"Valerie, Valerie, we're here — wake up," her mother whispered, lovingly stroking her arm, kneeling at her side.

"Mommy, mommy, mommy!" Valerie woke. "I'm sorry. Can I go home now?"

"Of course," Christine said. I closed the door quietly and remained outside until they were ready to go.

I thought I'd capture the moment forever on camera. But my film turned out light. That's OK, the moment will be one I'll never forget. New beginnings, new life in Christ. New life at home.

THE FRAGMENTS

The rose that bloomed

Through centuries of history Christ's resurrection has reached down to bless the believer. Herein lies the cornerstone of the Christian faith: If Christ be not raised then your faith is in vain.

Every Lord's Day we give testimony to the power that brought Jesus from the dead — the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valley!

G.B. Hardy summed up history in this manner:

Confucius' tomb — occupied
Buddha's tomb — occupied
Mohammed's tomb — occupied
Jesus' tomb — EMPTY. — GH

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Editor.....Guy Henderson
Associate Editor.....William H. Perkins Jr.
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Miss. State grad recalls sneaking out of town to play ball

By Tim Palmer

Bobby Shows admits he's had a lot of flashbacks in recent weeks during Mississippi State University's march toward the fabled "final four" of college basketball. "It's just flooding my mind with memories."

Today Shows is a member of the Missouri Baptist Convention missions education and ministry team. Thirty-three years ago, he was a member of the Mississippi State Maroons team that practically had to sneak out of Starkville to play in the National Collegiate Athletics Association tournament.

In 1963, Shows' senior year, the Maroons — now called the Bulldogs — qualified for the NCAA tourney by winning their third consecutive Southeastern Conference championship. But some powerful people in Mississippi tried to prevent them from competing because they would face opponents who had black players.

As noted in a March 24 article by Vahe Gregorian in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, this was just months after James Meredith had integrated the University of Mississippi, Oxford, and months before the murder of civil rights leader Medgar Evers in Jackson.

The Maroons had been eligible for NCAA post-season play the previous two years, Shows pointed out, but they were not allowed to participate. He doesn't remember feeling upset about it. "I reckon back then, whatever adults said, that was the law."

Shows is a native of the Brookhaven area, where his father was a rural schoolteacher. Segregation was simply "the way things were supposed to be" during his childhood. "As a kid, I don't ever remember it being an issue."

There wasn't racial hatred, he explained, nor was there mixing between races — on the basketball court or anywhere else. "The only time we played against blacks was when we had little pickup stuff in

the backyard or something like that.

"The segregation/integration stuff was more of an adult thing. We were either protected from it or naive to it."

That ended with the events of spring 1963.

Coach Babe McCarthy told his team prior to the 1962-63 season that if they could win another conference title, he would see to it that they went to the NCAA tournament. The players held up their end of the bargain by beating Tulane in the next-to-last game of the season to clinch the SEC crown.

McCarthy had an ally in Mississippi State President Dean W. Colvard, who had arrived in 1960. But a day before the team was to leave for the NCAA Midwest Regional in East Lansing, Mich., two Mississippi state legislators got a court injunction seeking to prevent the team from leaving and from using state money to play.

Colvard, McCarthy, and the school's publicist, Bob Hartley, met secretly and decided to hide to avoid being served the injunction. The team was supposed to leave on an airplane at 8:30 a.m., the *Post-Dispatch* reported, and there was concern they might be served the injunction at the airport. In case that happened, the team trainer and the reserve players went to the airport ahead of the starters. All were able to leave without incident.

"When we got there we were welcomed by fans that weren't Mississippi State people," Shows recalled. A pep band in the stands played the Mississippi State fight song in honor of the visitors.

Players from the Maroons' opponent, Loyola University of Chicago, and others in the tournament congratulated the Mississippians for standing up to the powers that be. Shows rode in an elevator with Nate Thurmond of Bowling Green University in

Kentucky, who went on to an outstanding pro basketball career. "He told me, 'We're sure glad you guys came.'"

Shows described the reception in Michigan thus: "It was almost like somebody had conquered something, and now they were showing up."

"We were kind of the Cinderellas — I don't know the word to describe it. Poor little boys from

Mississippi who had gotten to come to the big time, and people were glad for us. It was like (the movie) 'Hoosiers' — that kind of atmosphere."

All the uncertainty the Maroons went through before they could take the court against Loyola worked against them in the game, which they lost 61-51. Loyola went on to win the national championship.

"I think the tension that led up to this was a detriment to us," Shows said. "By the time we got there we were wore out."

The Maroons bounced back in the consolation game, defeating Bowling Green for third place in the regional.

"Upon their return, a pleased throng greeted the team," the *Post-Dispatch* reported.

(See MSU on page 5)

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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Thursday, March 28, 1996

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Stewardship endorses merger, staff incentives

NASHVILLE (BP) — The 30-member Stewardship Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention endorsed the portion of the denominational restructuring plan which will dissolve the agency and also approved incentive packages for employees who stay until the plan is implemented.

Commissioners, meeting in Nashville March 21-22 for their annual meeting, also approved a nine-month budget for 1996-97 of \$1,400,000. The nine-month budget, October through June, would be necessary if the messengers to the SBC annual meeting this June in New Orleans approve, for a second time, a change in SBC bylaw 15. If the bylaw change is approved, the Stewardship Commission — and seven other SBC agencies — would be dissolved, merged or eliminated by June 1997 as part of the "Covenant for a New Century" denominational restructuring plan.

Although not wanting to be seen as presuming approval of the vote in New Orleans, nevertheless, commissioners approved a resolution endorsing a plan which would merge the commission with the SBC Executive Committee and transfer two program assignments to the Baptist Sunday School Board. The resolution also expressed the commission's appreciation to the "Implementation Task Force (ITF) for their sensitivity to the commission and its staff in making this transition."

The ITF is a 10-member special committee appointed by the SBC Executive Committee to assist the affected agencies during the implementation of the restructuring plan. Under the proposed plan, the commission would merge with the Executive Committee — from which the commission was formed in 1960. The

program assignments for stewardship development and capital fund raising would be transferred to the Sunday School Board.

Ronald Chandler, commission president who a year ago publicly opposed the restructuring plan, told commissioners he was "confident the second vote on the (bylaw) will be approved.... Any opposition (by me) ceased to be, after the (covenant) vote." Chandler was referring to the passage of the restructuring plan in Atlanta in 1995.

Chandler also lamented that the commission's request for additional funds "in order to transfer effective programs over to the BSSB and Executive Committee was not granted. The budget being presented is not one of great vision and effectiveness."

Commissioners approved

incentive bonuses for employees who will stay until their positions are deleted, they are "transitioned to another agency," or until June 19, 1997.

Also, the benefit packages — medical and life insurance — of those employees will extend with the bonuses.

Commissioners were told the total bonus package was estimated to cost \$311,650. A special bonus package for Chandler was referred for further study with the commission to consider it at its March 1997 annual meeting.

Eugene O. Mims, Sunday School Board vice president, told commissioners the BSSB would give stewardship "high visibility, departmental status." He said the board would give present commission employees "first and complete consideration."

Common Ground worship conference will be held at FBC, Jackson, April 15-17

"Common Ground," a conference for worship leaders preparing for the 21st century, will be held April 15-17 at First Church, Jackson.

The conference, sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board (BSSB) in Nashville, will be led by Calvin Miller, professor of communications and ministry studies at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth; Harold Best, dean of the Wheaton College Conservatory of Music in Wheaton, Ill.; and Terry W. York, associate pastor of Park Cities Church in Dallas.

According to promotional information, "Common Ground (is) a worship conference cele-

brating the things we have in common. It's for pastors, music directors, youth directors, education directors, choir workers, accompanists, and instrumentalists — all those who are considered worship leaders within their community of faith."

The conference begins with registration at 6 p.m. on Monday, April 15, and concludes at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 17.

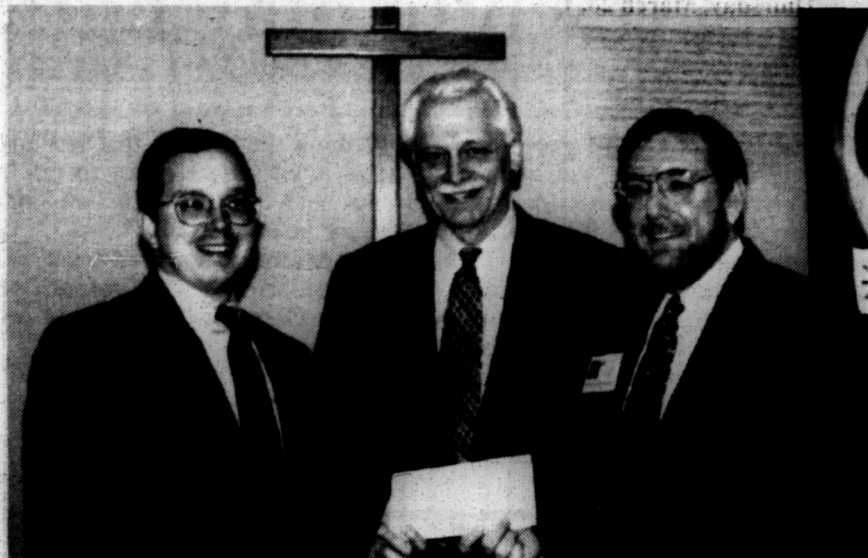
Registration is \$50 per person in advance or \$60 per person at the door. No refunds will be issued at April 1. Registration fee does not include lodging. Child-care is not provided.

For more information, contact Ron Jackson at (615) 251-2957.



MBREA leadership

Newly-elected 1996-97 officers of the Mississippi Baptist Religious Education Association (MBREA) include (from left) Jeff Ingram, First Church, Wiggins, president; Steve Huft, Calvary Church, Tupelo, president-elect; Mose Dangerfield, director of discipleship training for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), first vice president; Linda Reeves, consultant in the MBCB Sunday School Department, second vice president; and Cortez Hutchinson, First Church, Yazoo City, secretary-treasurer. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



Counseling Center receives grant

The Samaritan Counseling Center at the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center (MBMC) in Jackson recently received a \$25,000 grant from the Miracles of Grace Foundation, Inc. The funds were presented by Hal Fisher (left), executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, which disbursed the funds, to Paul Stephenson (right), director of MBMC's Pastoral Care Department. The grant funds will be used for the Samaritan Counseling Center's 1996 Clinical Pastoral Counseling Internship Program, Mississippi's only certifiable, graduate-level theological, clinical pastoral counseling training program. The program's goal will be to train ministers and qualified laity to be more competent counselors. Jay Chance (center) is executive vice president of MBMC's development office, The TRUST.

Baptist nurses plan USM "get away day" April 13

The Mississippi Baptist Nurses Fellowship will host a "Spring Get Away Day" April 13 at the Baptist Student Union (BSU) of the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) in Hattiesburg.

Registration will begin at 9 a.m. with coffee and doughnuts, and the event will conclude at 3 p.m. after an address by Graham Hale, chaplain at Forrest General Hospital in Hattiesburg.

Spring Get Away Day will also include:

— music by USM BSU students and Mississippi College stu-

dents.

— Honduran mission trip report by Laurel pharmacist William Wells.

— Pam Parnell of Weigh Down Workshop.

Registration is \$12 per person for the entire day (including lunch), or \$7 per person without lunch. Childcare is not provided.

For more information, contact Edna Ellison of the Woman's Missionary Union, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, at (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Miss. Baptists in Broadcasting hold annual banquet in Jackson

The Tenth Annual Mississippi Baptists in Broadcasting Workshop will be held April 19-20 at Calvary Church, Jackson.

The workshop is sponsored by the Department of Broadcast Services of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, directed by Farrell Blankenship.

An awards banquet will be held in the Calvary Church fellowship hall at 7 p.m. on April 19.

Chip Turner will be the keynote speaker for the banquet. He is teleconferencing coordinator for the Louisiana Instructional Satellite and Teleconferencing Network of Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, La.

The following awards in Radio and Television will be presented at the banquet: Best Program for Missions/Evangelism, Church Musical and Community Service; Best Spot and Best First Time Entry. Judges will also award one over-all award for Creative Use of Radio or Television.

On April 20, the conference will begin at 8 a.m., and conclude at 3:15 p.m. A continental breakfast will be served by Calvary Church at 8 a.m. Vendors will display their equipment throughout the day.

Individual workshops will

begin at 9 a.m. They will include: "Producing a Worship Service — Basic," led by Dennis Clark; "Producing a Worship Service — Advanced," and "Producing Pageants on a Budget," both led by Doug Price; "Shooting and Editing with the Single Camera," led by Bruce Cole. **Guidry**

Steve Guidry, and Ken Sims; "Basic Audio in the Church," and "Basic Audio in the Church — Hands-On," both led by David Edmonds; "Media Promotion in Your Church and Community," led by Chip Turner.

Clark is the minister of media at First Church, Lafayette, La., and program director at New Orleans Seminary's radio station.

Price is the director of development at KCBI Radio in Dallas. He has served as minister of media and executive producer of "First Light with John Bisagno" at Houston's First Church.

Cole is chairman of broadcast ministry at First Church, Bruce, which broadcasts over both local low-power and cable stations.

Guidry is chief executive officer of Video Works, Inc., a Jackson TV production firm.

Sims is Mississippi video and audio consultant for Mission Service Supply.

Edmonds is vice president and co-owner of Sound and Communications, Inc., Jackson.

Turner has received the ACTS TV Special Achievement Award for Promotion (National) 1986, 1987 and 1993; and ACTS 10th Anniversary Award for Outstanding Achievement.

Cost of registration for the workshop, including three meals and conference materials, is \$25. For churches who bring four or more persons for both days, cost is \$20 per person. For those attending only one day, cost is \$15 per person.

Advanced registration must be made by April 9. Mail registration fees and information to: Farrell Blankenship, MBIB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530. Make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

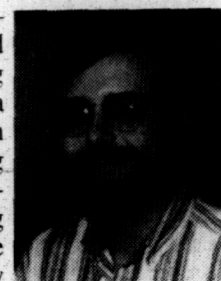
For more information contact Broadcast Services at the above address or phone (601) 968-3800, or (800) 748-1651, toll-free outside Jackson.



Turner



Clark



Price



Guidry



Sims



Edmonds



Bisagno

Jennings Orr sets March 31 retirement as convention board business administrator

By Guy Henderson

Who has worked in Senatobia, Starkville, Coldwater, Greenwood, and Laurel; then on to Washington, D.C., and South Pacific islands such as Guam, Ponape, Saipan, and others?

He graduated from Mississippi State University and went to work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Eventually he was responsible for the Rural Housing Program.

Jennings Orr was born in 1926 at Dossville, south of Kosciusko. He remembers the area around Dossville with fondness, recalling the cemetery at Rocky Point and the number of his kinsmen buried there.

He knows Renfro, Singleton (where he was baptized), Standing Pine, Fremont, Galilee Settlement, and a lot of other Mississippi communities.

He could be at home in the one-store village or the nation's capital. Up the road from

Dossville he met, courted, and married Carolyn Marie Oliver. They have three children: Jay, David, and Steve; and seven grandchildren.

Orr played basketball and football and later on in life would referee games on the court and gridiron. He has many stories to tell about games, coaches, and some of the fine young players he met on the circuit.

When he retired from the Department of Agriculture, he went to work as administrator at Columbia Church in Falls Church, Va.

He now teaches a Sunday School class at First Church, Jackson.



Orr

He has made volunteer mission trips to Japan and Zimbabwe.

He claims to play golf, shooting in the low 80s (on the first nine), and does an acceptable grade of yard work.

However, he did admit that reading is his favorite hobby.

Orr came to work for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in April 1984 as the business administrator. Since then, over \$250 million has been channeled into mission opportunities through the Cooperative Program. Also, \$57 million has been given directly to various mission fields through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. He has been very conscientious in seeing that funds went to the right place.

He likes to talk about stewardship and believes we have a responsibility for not only the tithe, but the total of what God has given to us.

He said that he had "observed

in life that where the heart is" will determine a person's attitude toward money. Some will talk but don't practice the message.

"We should depend on the Lord. God will provide and we should use it as wisely and prudently as possible," Orr said.

He was asked what message he would give to church treasurers or the person who is responsible for the finances. He maintains that the people who work in the business end of the church should also feel a divine call and recognize that God leads us to do our best in this area.

"I once had a pastor who stressed the blessings of giving and said our people need to know it. God doesn't need our gifts, but we need to give them," Orr pointed out.

Jennings Orr will retire March 31. He intends to continue to teach and minister to others as he has in the past.

TEACHERS TO CHINA

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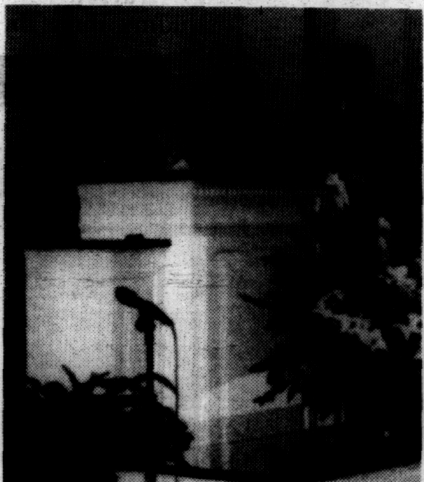
Teachers to China is a project of the Foreign Mission Board, The Brotherhood Commission, SBC, is recruiting volunteers.

Mississippi WMU holds annual meeting, welcomes missionaries

By Guy Henderson

The 117th annual meeting of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) convened at Alta Woods Church in Jackson, March 18-19. "Worth the Journey" was the meeting's theme. Those are some of the pertinent facts, but what was the WMU convention?

It was Sandra Nash of Clinton, presiding; and Eva Hart, pianist of First Church, Jackson, leading the music. It was the two daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Boots Rives of Jackson, Cindy Coon and Lisa Leavell,



Eva Hart (foreground), pianist at First Church, Jackson, leads congregational singing at the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting in Jackson.

singing "I Choose Jesus."

It was Esther Burroughs of the Home Mission Board, speaking of our unsaved cities and unsaved neighborhoods. She told of seeing BYOB in a home and explained to others it means "Bring Your Own Bible," as many classes were being conducted in the area.

It was Joyce Mitchell of WMU, in Birmingham, Ala., and Randy Sprinkle of the Foreign Mission Board saying, "Don't neglect the homeland."

The WMU annual meeting turned the spotlight on missions in the homeland.

It was Dottie Williamson, missionary to multi-housing ministries on the Gulf Coast, telling of Vacation Bible Schools in trailer parks, and of managers begging them to come back again.

The "Kool-Aid and cookie" work reaches hundreds every year.

It was Helen Johnson of the North Delta Association's ministry through their crisis pregnancy center and the 784 girls and women (ages 11-49) they have reached.

It was Kay Bennett of the Brantley Center in New Orleans reaching out to the homeless and alcoholics.

It was Charles Jones, director of Parchman prison ministries for

Mississippi Baptists, telling of his ministry's outreach to inmates and staff of the prison. Last year his ministry baptized 132 prisoners.

Jones told of one new believer facing death in the gas chamber who winked at the chaplain and said, "I'll see you later."

It was a huge welcome to parents of Mississippi missionaries, many of whom have grandchildren on the mission field, too.

Acteen Activators told of their mission trip to Bolivia; Andy White of Clinton and Paula Boatner of Brandon (her 17-year-old son was accidentally killed on a mission trip in Honduras) and Ronny Robinson, director of the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village, placing the spotlight on our children.

The spotlight on the world included reports from retired missionary to Liberia Margaret Fairburn; Diana Bridges, International Ministries, Starkville; and Patsy Davis, missionary to Venezuela.

It was Marjean Patterson, Mississippi WMU executive director-treasurer, who seems to know every missionary and missionary parent, telling of our part in a world of need.

Finally, but most important, the WMU annual meeting was praying for missionaries.

Thursday, March 28, 1996

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 5



Sandra Nash (left), president of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), and Marjean Patterson, executive director-treasurer of WMU of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, talk over the program during a break in activities at the state WMU annual meeting March 18-19 at Alta Woods Church, Jackson. (Photos by Guy Henderson)

Southeastern trustees address enrollment growth challenges

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — The record rate of growth in enrollment at Southeastern Seminary set the agenda for the spring meeting of the school's board of trustees March 11-12.

Trustees elected three new faculty members: Greg Lawson, Mark F. Rooker, and a third professor whose name is being withheld until he notifies his current place of ministry.

In other business, trustees: — gave approval for an advanced field archeology course within the seminary which will allow students to return to the archeological dig at Hazor, Israel, and receive course credit. The dig is sponsored by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and is located nine miles north of the Sea of Galilee. — approved a general studies

curriculum, required for students in the college's associate of divinity program.

— increased matriculation fees by \$5 per hour for master of divinity students.

— ordered a study of faculty and administration salaries "to ascertain if the school is in line with other seminaries and colleges," with a report to be given during their fall 1996 meeting.

Trustees also approved the addition of three new members — Curt Ball, Baytown, Texas; Jack Fallaw, Charlotte, N.C.; and Larry Howell, Oviedo, Fla. — to Southeastern's board of visitors, a group whose purpose is "to provide a means by which a broad range of friends of the seminary can assist in fulfilling our purpose of preparing God-called men and women for service."

MSU

From page 3

"(President) Colvard received threats, but the action helped lead to a nearly uneventful integration of the campus two years later." By the 1970s, Mississippi was recruiting black players. It didn't return to the NCAA tournament until 1991.

Shows commended the late coach McCarthy, a deacon at First Church, Starkville, for the break-

through in 1963 and "what he meant to me, to our state, joining together two races."

"He should be credited with a monumental star in his crown for his stand."

Shows said inclusion of black athletes has benefited sports as a whole. He is proud to see black Christian athletes such as pro football's Reggie White and pro basketball's David Robinson acting as strong role models for youths. "My prayer is that any athlete will use that gift for the glory of God."

After graduating from college and completing a master's degree,

Shows went into the ministry and found that his sports background was a launchpad to speaking invitations and opportunities to share his testimony. Shows is active in sports evangelism — this past weekend he directed the state Challengers basketball tournament in Jefferson City.

A Christian since his sophomore year at Mississippi State, Shows looks at race this way: "My feeling is that God created us all equal. We all stand on level ground before the cross. External features do not tell the true story of what the inside features are. Man looks on the outside, God looks on the inside. We're the same color inside."

The Bulldogs still wear maroon, and Shows has thoroughly enjoyed seeing them knock off Virginia Commonwealth, Princeton, Connecticut, and Cincinnati on the way to a March 30 showdown with Syracuse in East Rutherford, N.J.

Their former starting center predicts the Bulldogs will advance to the April 1 championship game, probably against Kentucky.

Not all of his flashbacks from 33 years ago relate to the intrigue surrounding the segregationists' attempt to block the team from playing.

"There's nothing like winning the big one," Bobby Shows declared. "There's just something about that thrill that I reckon only your salvation experience exceeds."

Palmer is managing editor, Missouri Word & Way.



MC student wins preaching award

Dennis Grant (center), a Mississippi College student and pastor of St. Mark M.B. Church in Clinton, has received the fourth annual Byrd Memorial Preaching Award from Mississippi College (MC). The award recognizes expository biblical preaching and includes a stipend to defray educational costs. Pictured with Grant (left to right) are Christine and Harrell Byrd, representatives of the Byrd Foundation; MC President Howell Todd; and Harold Bryson, director of the MC Institute for Christian Leadership.

BR posts deadlines

The Baptist Record posts the following deadlines for submitting news and advertising articles:

Deadline is Thursday noon prior to the following Thursday's publication for submission of news items. Example: In order for an item to appear in the April 11 issue, it must be received in The Baptist Record office by noon on Thursday, April 4.

The item must be typed or written clearly (with all pertinent facts included), and submitted by mail. Enclose a contact name and phone number in case a question arises.

Photographs should also be submitted by mail. People and activities depicted in the photo should be clearly described and identified. Black and white photos are preferred; high-contrast, well-lighted color photos are accepted. Polaroid photos do not reproduce well and should be avoided.

Deadline for reservation of advertising space is two weeks prior to the desired publication date. Example: In order for an advertisement to be included in the April 11 issue, space should be reserved with the advertising coordinator by noon on March 28.

Ad materials are due in The Baptist Record offices 10 calendar days prior to publication.

For more information, contact The Baptist Record at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Family Violence, Child Abuse Brutal Realities

Woman shares abuse experience

By Julie Nall

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP) — Cindy had seen a lot in her seven-year marriage, but she'd never seen her husband this badly out of control. Holding a loaded shotgun, he ordered their 5-year-old son to get down on his knees and pray. "Daddy's going home to Jesus," the 6-foot-2, 240-pound man told the boy. "And it's your mommy's fault."

As the child prayed and wept, Cindy (not her real name) suggested to her husband he leave the house for a little while to cool off. As soon as he did, she called her parents for help. The next day she filed for divorce.

A self-described "typical Southern Baptist child," Cindy is a pastor's daughter who became a Christian at age 5. She became a wife at 21, dreaming of the ideal, perfect marriage relationship.

Although she hadn't intended to have children right away, she soon was pregnant. After their son was born, her husband started with what she termed mental/emotional abuse. Through his words, her spouse communicated to Cindy: "I was more or less stupid, you know? I was the dumb woman/mother."

The couple lost their second child when she was 26 weeks pregnant. The baby had a disease

that strikes one of 60,000 people. Her husband laid the blame on Cindy.

That was when the physical abuse started — pushing and shoving. Her husband claimed "I wasn't fair to him — I didn't give him enough attention."

The birth of another child did not bring peace to the household. Cindy slept with the two children in a single bed. She described the situation as "walking on eggshells," never knowing what kind of mood her husband would come home in or what little thing might trigger his violent rage toward her or the children.

One night he threw her across the room because he didn't like what she was fixing for dinner. The family lived next to her father's church; her husband was the music director and Cindy played the piano. "He'd threaten us on the way to church."

Cindy began to pray. She felt that divorce was not right and she worried about the effect of a divorce on her father's ministry. She thought she could make things better.

Later, she discovered that her husband was a closet alcoholic — literally. His closet, which she had been forbidden to enter, was littered

with empty vodka bottles.

"My story is not unique," Cindy said. She is not Nicole Simpson or a rock star's girlfriend, she points out to audiences when she shares her story. "I'm your typical, everyday walk-of-life person."

After she left her husband, Cindy's mother-in-law told her she admired her for getting out — something the older woman had not had the courage to do in her own marriage.

Still, Cindy suffered for seven years. She stayed, she said, because of fear. One of her husband's repeated threats was: "I'll take the children — you'll never see them again." Insecurity was another factor. "Your self-esteem is so low you feel you can't make it."

Cindy is making it — although her struggles continue. Her ex-husband, after dropping out of sight for a time, recently has been seeking extended visitation rights to the children.

She tells her story to different groups. Her hope is that churches will become more aware of the problem of family violence and more willing to minister to its victims.

Nall writes for Missouri's *Word & Way*.

How should churches respond?

By Julie Nall

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP) — Family violence in Christian families is defined as a real and constantly occurring problem in "Comfort My People: The Church Responding to Family Violence," a paper by John Sisson of the Missouri Convention missions education and ministry team.

Sisson asked: "So where is the church amidst the turmoil and pain of family violence?"

"For centuries the church was an integral part of a society which held that women and children were little more than property," Sisson said. "The church at first legitimized spouse battering as a means of correction. Later the practice was outlawed, but it remained largely ignored because it was seen as a personal family matter." Church history related to the abuse of children is equally grim, he stated, and the church has been far too silent about such practices.

The modern church, Sisson wrote, has responded to family violence with mixed reactions, including total naivete, denial, indifference, and support. He classified churches in three categories: the "ostrich," the "stumbling block," and the "lighthouse."

The ostrich is best known for sticking its head into the sand. It remains blissfully unaware of any potential danger. "Ostrich" churches remain silent about family violence, either because they are naive or they deny the problem exists.

Testimonies are plentiful from victims of family violence about churches that met their cries for assistance with total disbelief, Sisson noted. "This seems to be particularly true when the accused is a leader in either the church or community. Thus, the 'ostrich' church needs awakening.... For those who suffer from family violence, the silence of our pulpits and the inactivity of our ministries is quite deafening...."

The error of the "stumbling block" church is that of indifference, failed logic or faulty theology. This church offers little constructive assistance to the cries for help, sometimes even turning the victims back to their homes with instructions to "suffer quietly for the sake of righteousness" or "be more submissive."

The lighthouse is a symbol of hope. Sisson pictures a lighthouse standing high above a rocky shoreline, serving as a beacon to those who are lost on stormy seas, steering ships away from that which might otherwise shatter and destroy them. The "lighthouse" church, then, stands as a beacon of hope, extending Christ's love to families who are adrift amidst their own violent storms.

Sisson believes the church is capable of helping in all aspects of the process of healing. In his paper, he offers lesson plan adaptations to train leaders in dealing with family violence. The lesson plans are designed for

programming; to prepare the church to be an advocate for abused children that come into the church; and as an outreach tool for community ministry.

Copies of his paper "Comfort My People" are available by request. For more information, contact Sisson at (314) 635-7931, ext. 442.

Domestic violence against children skyrockets across nation and state

Every 47 seconds — over 7,000 times daily — a child is abused or neglected.

An average of one American woman is battered by a husband or boyfriend every nine seconds.

The *Mississippi Voices for Children & Youth* newsjournal (March-April 1996 edition) has documented pages of unbelievable abuse across our nation. Headlines read: "Mom trades girl 8, for drugs, cops say"; "Kids fed rats, bugs"; "Mother convicted in daughter's slaying"; "Dad shoots 3 kids to death"; "Killer gets custody of gay mom's child"; and those are only the beginning.

The incidents declare a growing need for children's shelters in Mississippi. The journal offers a Child Abuse Hotline number: (800) 222-8000.

John Armistead, writing in the *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*, tells of Faith Haven, an emergency shelter for abused, abandoned, or neglected children. The shelter's director, Loraine Wesson, said that the "youngest child we ever had was one day old. The mother was 13 years old and wasn't sure who the father was, whether it was her 15-year-old brother or her natural father."

Wesson also declared that welfare kids are not necessarily the majority of cases. "Most of our kids

are probably middle-income people. The majority are white."

The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect calls it "a nation's shame" and speaks of 18,000 children a year who are disabled permanently and 142,000 who are seriously injured through domestic abuse. Last year 2,000 American infants or children died at the hands of parents or caretakers.

In Mississippi in 1995, the Department of Human Services received 17,840 reports of suspected child abuse.

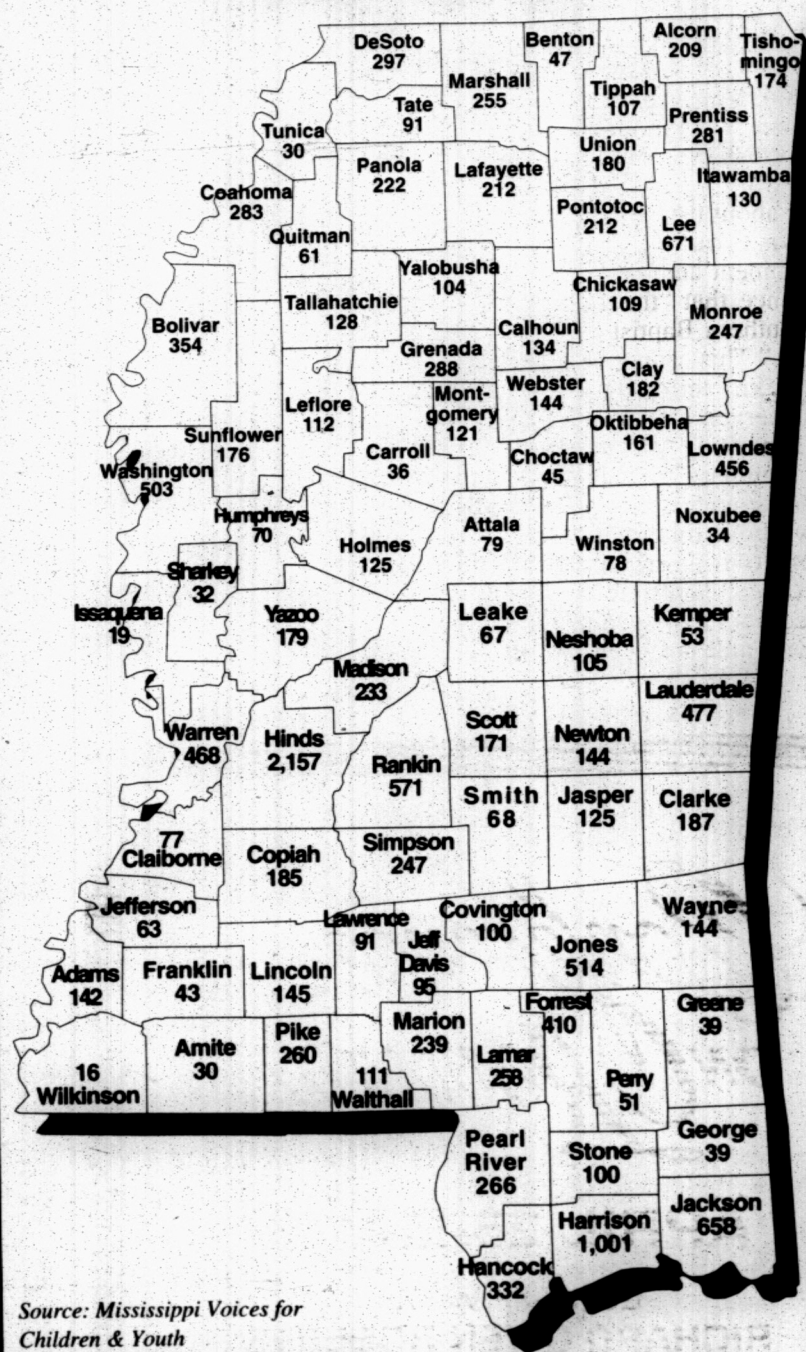
Christians, churches, and church staffers must be concerned and involved. Many people and organizations are trying to help these children, but are limited by lack of facilities and funds.

The Bible is plain on the subject: "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

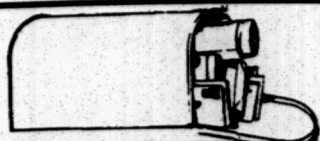
Mississippi Baptists have long had a part in this ministry through the Baptist Children's Village, now directed by Ronny Robinson. The home's record is long and admirable.

Now, however, there must be more involvement on a local level.

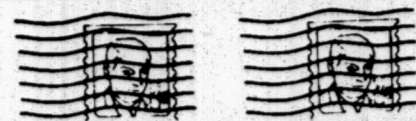
Mississippi Child Abuse/Neglect Statistics 17,840 Reports Investigated Calendar Year 1995



Source: Mississippi Voices for Children & Youth



Letters to the editor



Suckers for statistics

Editor:

We Americans (and we Baptists) are suckers for statistics.

In your March 7 issue, George Barna is quoted as saying 50% of people getting married this year believe their marriage will end in divorce. No way do I believe this. I've never ever met a couple getting married who thought they would become a divorce statistic. (Some should have, obviously, since they did.)

I wonder about the statistics we hear thrown around. Today, I heard a prominent authority report to a conference that "the average tenure of Southern Baptist pastors is 18 months." This cannot be true. In fact, I've known of very few pastors who served any church for that short a period. And most of them were seminary students, and that shouldn't count.

Or, how about this one: "One out of every two marriages will end in divorce." That one we've heard batted about for years. It's another myth, and not even close to reality.

In a re-election campaign, Franklin D. Roosevelt needed some statistics for a radio broadcast due to go on the air that night. His staff was unable to find the information and told him so. Yet, on the broadcast Roosevelt quoted a very specific set of statistics to bolster his point. Later when his staff asked how he managed to get the information they couldn't, he said, "By the time my opponent finds out I made it up, it will be too late for him to do anything about it!"

Joe McKeever, pastor
First Church
Kenner, La.

Thanks to Adkins

Editor:

Just recently our friend S.A. (Sonny) Adkins completed two terms of service on the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Sonny brought great honor and distinction to our state in his service to the Annuity Board.

Anyone who knows Sonny does not have to be told of his

enthusiasm, encouragement, and compassion which is contagious. He served in many places of leadership and was often called to bring devotions before business meetings. Everyone will miss him and his infectious laugh that always made long meetings more enjoyable.

Sonny often left Forest at 4 a.m. to catch an early flight to Dallas for a meeting. He could have left on Sunday, but his church and people in Forest always came first.

Not only did he reflect his great love of the Lord, but also a positive attitude about our great state and its people. He and Jean are great ambassadors as they represent our state in an exemplary manner.

Jack Colvin
Annuity Board trustee
Jackson

Touched by a friend

Editor:

Tommy Nelson worked for 15 years at the Baptist Building. He was friend to many of the employees and Baptists across the state. He died Jan. 9, 1996, in California. These words express the feeling of so many of us:

As we travel this pilgrimage of life, we experience many people, situations, and circumstances.

There are mountaintops and valleys; there are joys and sorrows; there are crises and blessings. All of these mold us and make us into what we are and determine what we become.

Many people cross our paths who touch our lives in numerous ways and for various reasons.

Sometimes, we are privileged as God uses someone to teach us how to become more like him.

Perhaps the hardest lesson we have to learn as a Christian is to be more like Jesus, looking at others through eyes of compassion — to love as he loved.

During the past four years, God

used a unique individual to help me learn that lesson of compassion. And, although this person was cut from a different cloth; didn't always fit into the mold; was hard to understand; and was, at times, misunderstood, God used him to touch my life, teaching me some hard, but valuable, lessons. One lesson in particular was how to look beyond the fault and see the need.

God has reminded me how important it is to care and love when he gives the opportunity, for tomorrow that chance may be gone forever.

Thank you, Father, for every expression of your love, but most of all thank you for bringing one, Tommy Nelson, across my path.

"And the king shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Sharline Bufkin
MBCB Support Services

Sphere of influence

Editor:

On March 8, 1955, I began my position as secretary in the State Sunday School Department when E.C. Williams was Sunday School Secretary. I met Carolyn Madison, for whom I was also secretary. March 8 was Carolyn's birthday and she would always tell me I was her birthday present. After I left the Sunday School Department, I called her on her birthday every year.

Carolyn is remembered in so many ways and touched many lives through her ministry as children's worker. The Christmas tree in Washington that adorns the Capitol each year could not hold all of the Christmas stockings she knitted for babies' first Christmases.

Carolyn was quick to correct anyone about her work in a loving way with that quick smile. She always had time to listen and one of her favorite things to say was, "If your child misbehaves, find a diversion before you spank." She believed in discipline but also finding loving ways to do it. She received many gifts — not just on special occasions but individuals would bring gifts by the office and tell Carolyn, "Just 'cause I love you." Carolyn and I worked at Kittiwake and Gulf-shore assemblies each summer and she was serious in the program but we had so much fun

during our times of fellowship.

I met my husband at the Baptist Building (his sister is Mary Barr who was secretary in WMU). When we were married in 1957 Carolyn gave a bridal shower for us, and each time I look at the measuring cup I think of a special friend, Carolyn. When Carolyn died it was our loss and heaven's gain. Happy Birthday, Carolyn.

Pat Irwin
D'Lo

Tribute to Gore

Editor:

I would like to pay tribute to A.C. Gore. Certainly, our loss is heaven's gain. Bro. Gore died on Feb. 8. All who knew him will greatly miss him, especially the Schooner Valley Church. He served them as pastor for some 24 years.

When I moved to Houlika, from Groom, Texas, eight years ago, Gore quickly became a close friend of mine. Many were the times when I would drive out to his house to receive wise counsel. Especially during those times of discouragement and being burdened down, God would use Bro. Gore to renew my strength and courage.

I was always amazed at his knowledge of the Bible and the fundamental doctrines that we hold dear as Southern Baptists. Bro. Gore was a learned man, yet he never went to seminary. How did he know so much? Bro. Gore was taught at the feet of the Master.

My prayer is that when I'm nearing the end of my ministry that I will be as sweet, kind, gentle, and encouraging to young preachers as Bro. Gore was to me.

I loved A.C. Gore and miss him greatly.

Rick Burton, pastor
Mt. Zion Church
Independence

Don't twist the Word

Editor:

In response to the "Don't play God" letter in the March 14 edition, the writer is correct in saying that "God knows the end of everybody even before conception." However, if it is not in God's will for a child to be born, then it is in his power to end the unborn child's life. He does not need the help of mankind to decide who should or should not be born.

Jesus was indeed right when he said that it would have been better for Judas had he not been born. However, Judas was part of God's plan to offer us his gift of salvation. Judas could have been forgiven for his actions if he had only repented, just as we can be forgiven if we repent.

Jesus did not make the statement about Judas to allow the taking of lives of unborn babies. Let's not twist the words of our Lord to condone the murder of his precious children.

Melynda Moseley
Carriere

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Names in the News



Puckett Church, Puckett, ordained three new deacons, **Jim Burnham**, **Robert Love**, and **Jessie Puckett**, on March 3. Special guest speakers were Allen Stephens, Rankin County director of missions, and Mark Burnham. Pictured, left to right, are Barry Ward, pastor; Stephens; Puckett; Love; Jim Burnham; and Mark Burnham.

Mississippi alumni of New Orleans Seminary recently elected Ed J. Deuschle of Bay St. Louis as president; C. Alan Woodward of Ellisville as vice president; and Nathan L. Barber Sr. of Hattiesburg as secretary of the state NOBTS Alumni Association.

Laura Crawford of Berea College in Kentucky has joined Mississippi College as visiting professor of nursing. Crawford, who has taught nursing for 29 years, is a graduate of Emory University and Berea College.

Sheila L. Skemp, associate professor of history at the University of Mississippi, will deliver the annual Edward N. Akin Lecture-ship on April 16 on the Mississippi

College campus. For more information, call (601) 925-3221.

Rex Frieze, specialist in church and tax laws, will present two conferences at New Orleans Seminary on April 1. Frieze was recently chief business and financial officer for First Church, Orlando, Fla. To register and receive more information on this and other conferences, call (800) NOBTS-01.

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (ABP) — Retired Wake Forest University President James Ralph Scales died March 12 in Winston-Salem. He was 76. Scales was president of the university from 1967-83, a period which saw Wake Forest grow from a small Baptist school to a university with a national academic reputation.

Southern Baptist Assembly and Camp Manager's Conference held its annual meeting in February at Windermere Assembly,

Staff Changes

Southway Church, Brookhaven, has called **James D. (Danny) Dodds** as pastor effective March 13. A native of Leake County, he previously served at Second Church, Kosciusko. Dodds received his education at New Orleans Seminary and Covington



Second Church, Kosciusko, has called **Reggie and Debbie Daugherty** as minister of music and pianist, respectively, effective Feb. 11. They previously served Pleasant Hill Church in Leake County. He is a graduate of East Central Community College and Mississippi College. They are the parents of three daughters.

Theological Seminary.

County Line Church, Overtt, has called **James Macon Phillips** as pastor, effective March 3. The Ellisville native is a graduate of Jones County Junior College, and is a student at William Carey College. He formerly served West Laurel Church as minister of youth, and First Church, Ellisville, as minister of fellowship.

First Church, Ocean Springs, has called **Clovis Barnett Jr.** as minister of education, effective March 18. The Ocean Springs native is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, Dallas Theological Seminary, and Southwestern Seminary. He formerly served as associate pastor of Suburban Bible College Church in Highland, Ind. Hal Selby is pastor of First Church, Ocean Springs.



Barnett

Roach, Mo. W. Wesley Huff, CCCA, was elected president for the 1996-97 year. Huff is director of Eagle Eyrie Conference Center, Lynchburg, Va.

PINEVILLE, La. (BP) — Robert Lynn, president of Louisiana College since 1975, announced his retirement March 19 at the annual spring meeting of the Louisiana College board of trustees, according to Sellers Aycock, chair of the board of trustees.

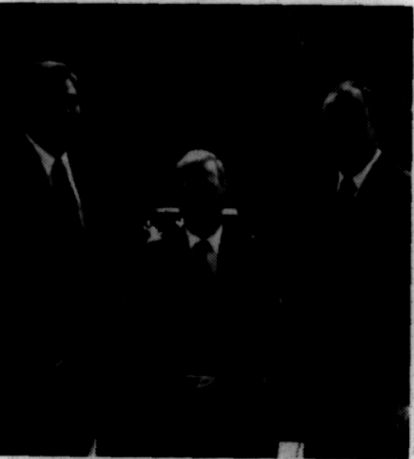
D. Swan Haworth, 90, died Feb. 26 in Fayetteville, N.C. He was former pastor of First Church, Vicksburg, from 1939 to 1951.



Vaiden Church, Vaiden, recently honored its pastor and his wife, **Leon and Geneva Holly**, with a trip to the Holy Land.



Highland Church, Crystal Springs, held an ordination service for **Robby Britt** on March 3. Pictured from left are Britt, pastor of Gooden Lake Church, Belzoni, and Bill Hudon, pastor, Highland Church.



Charles Herrin was licensed to the ministry on Jan. 28 by Military Church, Sumrall. He may be contacted for supply, interim, or pastorate position at (601) 758-3960. Pictured from left are Herrin; Douglass Benedict, director of missions, Lamar Association; and Mike Aultman, pastor.

Missionary News

Kenneth and Lynn Baker, missionaries to the Ivory Coast, are in the States (address: P.O. Box 4457, Dowling Park, Fla. 32060). He was born in Booneville, and considers St. Augustine, Fla., his hometown. The former Lynn Powell of North Carolina, she was born in Morganton and considers Asheville her hometown.

James and Olive Reppeto, Baptist representatives to Costa Rica, are in the States (address:

203 North Main, Carrollton, Mo. 64633). He is a native of Kansas City, Mo. The former Olive Hundley, she was born in Drew, and grew up there and in Yazoo City.

Freddie and Karen Womble, missionaries to Paraguay, are on the field (address: Casilla 1415, Asuncion, Paraguay). He was born in Vicksburg, and considers Monticello, his hometown. The former Karen Rodden, she was born in Terceira, Azores, and considers Mobile, Ala., her hometown.

Homecomings

Trinity, Pearl: March 31; 11 a.m.; dinner in fellowship hall, noon; 1:30 p.m. singing; Kenny Goff, pastor.

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Just for the Record



"Sunshiners" senior adults of Fellowship Church, Mathiston, had a hayride through the countryside, Oct. 12. For many of these "sunshiners," this was the first time they had been on a hayride. The senior adult leader is Irene Pollard. Ralph Cain is pastor.

First Church, Jackson, will hold a Divorce Recovery workshop on six consecutive Thursdays, beginning April 4. The workshop will include support groups for children and teenagers. Registration is \$20. For more information or to register, call the First Church single adult ministry at (601) 949-1906.

The Heightsmen Quartet of Clinton will be in concert at **Broadmoor Church, Gulfport,** March 30, 7 p.m.; **Grace Memorial Church, Gulfport,** March 31, 1 p.m.; and **Petal Harvey Church, Hattiesburg,** March 31, 6 p.m. For more information, call Brian Pannell at (601) 924-5483.

Senior adults of First Church, Ovett, have compiled and published a book on Ovett history. The book entitled **Ovett Reflections** is now available. Call (601) 344-0802 or write to the church at P.O. Box 262, Ovett, MS 39464 for more information. Tommy Mangum is pastor.

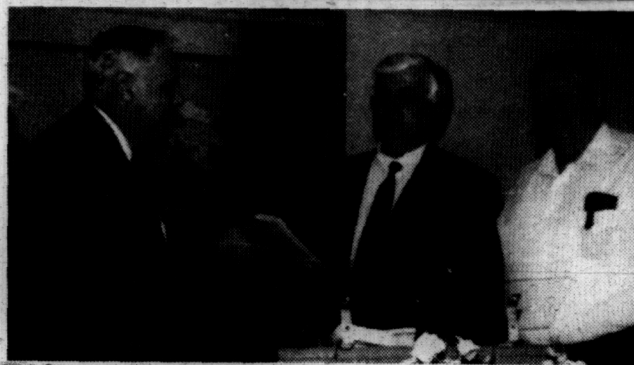
First Church, Pontotoc, continues its six-month sesquicentennial celebration. On April 21, **The Walk of Faith**, a book written on the history of the church, will be presented at the 10:40 a.m. service. There will also be a presentation from the Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission. Ed Ludlow, professor at Blue Mountain College, will be the featured

organist at the 7 p.m. service. On April 28, Joyce Mitchell, Associate Executive Director of the WMU, will be the guest speaker for the 10:40 a.m. service. She will also be speaking at an associational WMU banquet on April 27. W.H. Sims III is pastor.

Highland Church, Meridian, will host author and speaker Steve Farrar in a men's conference on April 19-20. The conference, "Ridin' for the Brand," will begin April 19 at 7 p.m., and run April 20 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Early registration closes April 8. Cost before that date is \$40; cost after April 8 will be \$50. For more information, call (601) 482-0191. To register, call 1-800-MEN-LEAD.

Leesburg Church, Morton, will present its Easter musical, "Once and for All," on April 5 and 6 at 7 p.m. Tickets are not necessary, but a reservation is recommended. For more information or for reservations, call the church at (601) 854-5306.

Raceway Ministries of Talladega, Ala., will host a regional retreat on April 26-28 at Shocco Springs (Ala.) Baptist Assembly. The retreat is open to persons interested in ministry to racing fans and competitors. Cost for the retreat is \$55. For more information, call Richard Alford at (800) 264-1225.



William (Bill) Smith (center) member of **Southern Hills Church, Natchez,** and on behalf of the membership of Southern Hills Church, presented to Cloverdale Church recently the deed and all worldly goods of Southern Hills Church located on Seargent Prentiss Drive. Those accepting the presentation along with and on behalf of Cloverdale membership were David McGuffee (left), pastor, and chairman of deacons, James Huff (right). Members of Southern Hills Church were united with Cloverdale Church a few weeks prior to the presentation.

Noxapater Church, Noxapater, honored its senior adults on Feb. 13 with a Valentine Banquet. Leo Barker, director of missions, Neshoba Association, and former pastor of Noxapater Church was the guest speaker. "This is the highest attendance that we have had for any senior adult function since I have been pastor of Noxapater Church," said Wayne Sanders.

Alcorn Association recently held its annual Volunteer Missions Fair at **Wheeler Grove Church.** The fair, which is planned and coordinated by the Associational Missions Development Director Nat Mayhall, Brotherhood director Ed Settle, and WMU director Barbara Smith, is held each year to recognize volunteers in all association projects. Those who have participated in local church mission trips and ongoing projects are also recognized. Guests included Mary Frank Kirkpatrick, former missionary to Africa, Jan Cossitt, who displayed the WMU Disaster Van, and Connie Vandiver, ventriloquist, representing Northeast Community College BSU. Ed Gandy is director of missions.

Bay Vista Church, Biloxi, is planning its 35th anniversary celebration, to be held on Oct. 6. The anniversary committee presently seeks addresses of former members and staff. Call Jerri Frith at (601) 388-3929 for further information.

North Winona Church, Winona, held Friend Day on March 3. In attendance were 478 in Sunday School and 642 in morning worship. The results included five professions of faith, one by letter, and one rededication. Terry Long is pastor.



Hernando Church, Hernando, set a goal of \$15,000 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The deacons suggested that if the membership reached its goal, the church match it with another \$15,000 from the general fund. The total gift given was \$30,781.05, which was the largest ever given for the 155-year-old church. Pictured in front of the Missions Center are James Spencer, pastor; Kay Hodge, WMU director; and Jerry Pitts, treasurer.



Vaiden Church, Vaiden, will hold its 1996 Trail Ride on April 19 and 20. A fish fry and gospel singing is planned for April 19. The purpose of this activity is to raise money for a benevolence fund at the church. This fund was established to aid individuals who have a financial burden because of an accident, fire, tornado, or any other tragedy. During the last year over \$7,600 was administered to 19 families. For more information, call (601) 464-8810.



Five Acteen Queens received their crowns at a recent recognition service at First Church, Boyle. Queens pictured from left are Carla Holland, Christy Therrell, Teri Whitman, Stephanie Horne, and Pam Greer.

Choctaw Association adult rally was held at **Weir Church** on Feb. 15. Ministers on program included Danny Irving, Blythe Creek Church; David Shivers, Ackerman Church; Jerry Wise, Fentress Church; Curtis Guess, Weir Church; and Ferrell Cork, Tupelo, guest speaker.

Clarke-Venable Memorial Church, Decatur, will hold a

dedication service for its newly-renovated sanctuary on March 31 at 1:30 p.m., following regular morning services and a noon meal in the fellowship hall. John Sharp, director of missions for Newton/Scott Association, will be the guest speaker. Former pastors Gus Merritt and Fred Fowler will also be on the program. Richard Ethridge is pastor.

Calvary Church of Oak Grove, Hattiesburg, will present its Easter drama at 7 p.m. on March 29-31. "Calvary's Love: An Evening of Worship and Praise of the Mission and Ministry of Jesus Christ" will be performed in the church sanctuary under the direction of Nan Davis. Richard Davis is minister of music; John Voss is pastor.

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LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

I am sick of my wife's almost constant threats to commit suicide. Should I have her committed to a mental facility?

You should cross out all other possibilities before seeking commitment. Is she under the care of a doctor? Is she taking any medication? If so, immediately report these threats to her doctor. If not, enlist the help of a doctor right away. Suicide threats should always be taken seriously. The old myth is not true that people won't follow through on suicide threats; suicide is an angry act usually committed out of despair and depression. However, there are people who use such threats to gain the attention of others. If this is the case, give her your attention by acknowledging the good things that she accomplishes in her life. When she threatens suicide, ask her about her plan. You won't be planting the idea in her mind since she is already threatening, but this will help you determine how serious she is about following through on the threats. If you sense she is

serious, get her to a doctor as soon as possible. She is beyond your help at this stage. Allow the doctor to decide on in-patient care.

My church recently brought in a part-time "therapist." What are the qualifications for a church-sponsored counselor?

Qualifications will differ according to the organization that hires the therapist. The qualifications I believe to be important, especially in a church counselor, are:

— A growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

— Minimum of a master's degree in marriage and family therapy, social work, or psychology.

— Supervised clinical experience, pastoral education, chaplaincy, or guidance counseling.

The Christian church is meant to be a community of healing. Therapy is one of many ways that a church can minister to its hurting members, as well as provide a way to reach out beyond the walls of the church.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

First person...

"Mend the fence and keep the black bull out," Mercer wrote by accident

By Earl Kelly

Once I had the opportunity to be the guest of a Baptist family in Bay Minette, Ala. On the wall of their guest room was framed the front page of **The Alabama Baptist** dated July 23, 1879. Midway in the page there was an article which told a true story from the life of Jessie Mercer, for whom Mercer University in Macon, Ga., is named.

Mercer was a prolific writer of letters by hand. On one occasion he received in the same day's mail a letter from the overseer of his plantation complaining about the livestock breaking into the fields and destroying some of the crops. He stated that the herd was led by a black bull. In the same mail, he received a letter from a Corinthian-type church that was split down the middle. Obviously, the congregation was not a "bond of love." The congregation was seeking advice as to how the fellowship could be mended. Mercer replied to both letters that evening and somehow inadvertently switched the

letters in the envelopes so that the church received the letter he had written to the overseer of the plantation. The letter to his overseer was short and tart. It stated simply, "Mend the fence and keep the black bull out."

The letter was read by the leader of the congregation to the church at their next business meeting. When the short sentence, "Mend the fence and keep the black bull out," was read the congregation became very angry. A unanimous resolution was passed to censor Jessie Mercer for his crude advice.

Then suddenly in the back of the church, a member of the church stood and said, "This is the first meeting in years in which the church has agreed unanimously on any question. It is obvious that such a great Baptist leader as Jessie Mercer did not intend to offend us but rather the letter has a deeper meaning. Obviously the black bull refers to the work of the devil. He is telling us to mend our broken relationships and keep the devil out."

According to the record, the church immediately mended its fence and came together.

Paul's letter to Corinth had no hidden meaning, but his appeal to them, if kept, would mend the fences and keep the black bull out. "Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you" (2 Cor. 12:11).

Kelly is executive director-treasurer emeritus of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Cartersville marks 70th

Cartersville Church, Petal, will observe its 70th anniversary beginning April 12, when Larnelle Harris will appear in concert at the church at 7 p.m.

On Sunday, April 14, the church will hold a homecoming. Regular Sunday School hours will be observed.

Former members will be recognized during the 10:30 a.m. worship service, which will be followed by a dinner on the grounds.

An afternoon worship service will highlight former ministers of music. Boyd Tweety will present a mini-concert.

For more information, call the church at (601) 584-9457. Leland Hogan is pastor.

Revival Dates

First, Ovett: March 31-April 3; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Hubert Jarvis, West Memphis, Ark., evangelist; Jimmy Knight, music; Tommy Mangum, pastor.

Alexander Memorial, Hollandale: April 14-17; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon and 7:30 p.m.; Jimmy Latham, Kilmichael, evangelist; Benny Rigby, Winona, music; Michael R. McLendon, pastor.

Bethel, Columbus: April 26-28; Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.; David Green, Columbia, evangelist; David Stephens, Columbus, music; Ron Harrison, pastor.

Terry Road, Jackson: March 31-April 3; Sunday services, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., and noon meal in fellowship hall; Mon.-Wed., 7 nightly; Brent Causey, pastor, evangelist; James Netherland, music.

Hopewell (Scott): March 31-April 3; Sunday, noon meal, no night service; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Tommy Anderson, evangelist; Danny Harrison, music; Mark McDonald, pastor.

Cash (Scott): March 31-April 3; Sunday, 10:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Randal Creel, Newton Association, evangelist; Edwin Pope, music; Bob Smith, pastor.

Just for the Record

Bill and Laurie Sky, award-winning old-time gospel music family from Nashville will be at **Robinhood Church, Brandon**, March 31 at 6 p.m. Don Nerren is pastor.

The General Assembly of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) will meet June 27-29 in Richmond, Va. Church historian Martin E. Marty will deliver the keynote address at the Thursday's opening night

session. A search committee chaired by retired Woman's Missionary Union Executive Director Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler hopes to recommend a new coordinator at the April meeting of CBF's Coordinating Council. If elected, the new coordinator will be invited to speak during the Saturday morning session. Coordinator Cecil Sherman will deliver his final report the previous day. The 1997 assembly will be June 26-28 in Louisville, Ky.

Gum Grove Church, Brookhaven, will hold its fifth Sunday night hymn singing on March 31

at 5:45 p.m. Special guests will be the Gospel Messengers.

Alexander Memorial Church, Hollandale, exceeded its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions goal of \$1,200. The total amount received was \$1,260. Michael R. McLendon is pastor.

Oak Grove Church, Lake, contributed \$1,503.50 to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions after observing the week of prayer and a program on "People Count." Victor Vaughn is pastor.

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Uniform

A compelling invitation



By David Mitchell
Luke 14

When trying to determine Jesus' purpose in telling a parable it is always important to remember a parable argues from human relations to divine. The parable in Luke 14 is drawn from an everyday life occasion. Jesus had been invited to the home of one of the leaders of the Pharisees. It was the Sabbath, and they were eating a meal. Jesus was the center of attention at the wedding feast. Probably in a moment when the conversation lulled, one of the Pharisees reclining at the table raised a piece of bread and in a loud voice announced: "Blessed is everyone who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" (v. 12).

In this man's mind, the kingdom of God was still to come. He did not realize that the kingdom was present. There at the table beside him was the Messiah, the One who had come to usher in the kingdom. The Pharisee did not recognize it.

The first invitation (vv. 16-17). It was customary during this period of history to extend two invitations to a banquet. The first was to make reservations and the second was to announce that the banquet meal was beginning. In verse 17 we see the second invitation. The servant in the parable was sent out to proclaim that "everything is now ready." Clearly the point of the servant's invitation was that the kingdom of God was present.

The excuses (vv. 18-20). The three excuses listed were given as examples of lame excuses that the entire group gave. It is important for us to notice that each of these excuses relates to cares of the world. More than likely, Jesus' audience saw some humor in the first two excuses. Who buys land without first examining the land, or who would buy a yoke of oxen without examining them? It is not crucial to understand and scrutinize the purpose of the excuses — Luke simply wanted to convey that all made excuses. The emphasis was not on the validity or lack of validity found in the excuse. The point was that the kingdom of God was not present and no excuse is adequate or valid for those who do not want to attend the banquet. What excuse is a good excuse when one forfeits his soul?

The second invitation (v. 21). The group in verse 21 who received an invitation to come to the banquet represented Jews whom the Pharisees thought unworthy of God's kingdom. Included in this group would be those who were physically ill, tax collectors, and those who did not keep the religious traditions of the Pharisees. Jesus explained through this parable that even though the Pharisees excluded particular groups from God's love, God invited them to the great banquet.

The third invitation (v. 23). This group probably represented the Gentiles. The Gentiles whom the Pharisees certainly scorned were also invited to partake in the messianic banquet. The slave was instructed to "impel them to come in." This phrase did not refer to a specific evangelistic technique, but rather helps us better see that God wants all to overcome their shyness and feelings of unworthiness and accept his invitation to the great banquet. The desire of the householder was "that my house be filled" (v. 23). The householder's desire was to share his great banquet with every person possible.

It would be easy for us to see the characters in this parable as being represented by Jesus the servant, God the householder, those who received the first invitation as the Jews, those who received the second and third invitations as the Gentiles and sinners. This parable helps us to understand that God's offer of salvation is offered to every person. The thought of the parable goes something like this: "How great it would be to receive an invitation to God's banquet and accept it." The response to those who made excuses would then be: "This is the choice that has been offered, but look at what you have done with your invitation; if God chooses to find a place at his table for all the outcasts of the world, even the worst sinners, then that should be all right because it is not God who has excluded you or anyone else, but you have excluded yourself."

When God invites men into the kingdom, their salvation depends upon their accepting his invitation. Those who find themselves outside the kingdom of God who hear the words, "Depart from me, I never knew you," have only themselves to blame.

Mitchell is pastor of Van Winkle Church, Jackson.

Bible Book

The role of grace



By Clayton Littlejohn
Titus 2, 3

In an era when it seems the church has a lot of spots and wrinkles, Paul's teaching on grace and right living reveals that redemption from sin should lead to godly living.

Instruction in righteous behavior (2:1-6). In Titus 1:12 Paul quoted the famous Cretan poet Epimenides, who described the people as, "... liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." That's a terrible testimony for anyone, and Paul wanted the believers in Crete to avoid any such act that would put the church in that category. It is the nature of the church to resist that lifestyle.

Paul referred to the church in family terms: older men, older women, younger women, husbands, and children. He went on to describe the characteristics of the godly church and family. Notice some of the words used to describe the believer's character: temperate, dignified, sound, perseverance, reverent, encouraging, loving, sensible, pure workers, subject, etc. Also notice the negative characteristics believers were to avoid: not malicious gossips, not enslaved to much wine, not dishonoring to God.

Today, if God's ministers and laity will follow these truths, it will draw the attention of our communities to the Lord Jesus. We do this so that "the Word of God may not be dishonored" (2:5). If a true believer doesn't contrast the world, it makes non-believers question the power and reality of our God and his Word. Through God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can express these godly characteristics and behave in a righteous manner. Why don't you take a few minutes and test yourself, using verses 1-6 as the guideline?

The importance of grace in Christian living (2:11-14). I believe outside the name Jesus, grace is the most beautiful word of all languages, and if it were not for grace, we wouldn't know the name and the person Jesus.

Paul stressed the fact that "the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (2:11). This verse doesn't mean all men will be saved, but that all have the opportunity to be saved because of God's grace. Grace not only saves us, it changes our lives. Where once we lived ungodly lives, grace now directs us to live righteous lives. "in this present age" (v. 12), not vice versa.

Not only is there grace to help us lead righteous lives, there is hope. Hope is that blessed assurance that Jesus is coming again to deliver us from the very presence of sin to reign with him for eternity. If grace and hope are not affecting the way you live, then you need to see if you have accepted and experienced God's grace.

A description of salvation (3:3-7). In verse 3, Paul gave a description of believers' lives and motives before salvation. When one experiences salvation by grace, "not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness" (v. 5), they also experience the "washing of regeneration." This is not baptism of water as some presume, but it is that act of cleansing that removes all sins, past, present, and future. We, like Peter, don't need a full cleansing again, we just need to "sponge off" by confessing our sins (John 13:10; 1 John 1:9). In ancient days, they would take a bucket of water and pour it over a person who was soaped down to wash away the dirt. In the spiritual sense, the Holy Spirit has been "poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (v. 6). This process is adequate and continual, "renewing by the Holy Spirit" (v. 5).

At the moment of salvation, every believer receives the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9) and is baptized into the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). We never need to ask for the Holy Spirit, he is always with us. It is he who will give us the power to live a godly life in an ungodly world.

Notice in verse 7 that salvation by grace has "justified" (or, "just as if I'd" never sinned) us. We do continue to sin, but his grace is so great that when we stand before Jesus face to face, we stand there justified. We are not only justified, we are also "heirs" to eternal life, which is all the riches that are in Christ Jesus (John 17:3).

To sum up the role of grace in Christian living, we know that it is by God's grace that we are saved, now and forever, and that by living by God's grace, our lives will radically contrast the lives of the unbelievers. Grace is a gift (Eph. 2:8-9). Accept it, enjoy it, share it, and live by it.

Littlejohn is pastor of Ingram Church, Baldwin.

Life and Work

A firm foundation



By Linda Donnell
Matthew 7

The last act! Jesus has described the characteristics of kingdom living, issued some warnings for the disciples, and challenged them to commitment. Now, in the final segment of his sermon, Christ is calling them to action.

We can verbally accept the teaching of Christ and even choose the narrow road of kingdom living, but the important point is the commitment to action — actually walking down the road. In the words of Patrick Morley, "There is a moment of surrender and a process of surrender." The process involves living out the will of God. It involves a relationship with him. Most importantly, it demands implicit obedience. It is obedience to Christ that is the only sure foundation for life.

The wise builder (vv. 24-25). It has been said that any good sermon is comprised of three points and a poem. The Sermon on the Mount meets that criteria, except that Jesus chose to end with a story instead of a poem. He compared the person who heard and put his words into action to the wise man who was diligent enough to build his house on a rock foundation (v. 24).

Now, building a house on rock in the day of Christ was not an easy task. It required much grading and an enormous amount of hard work. Nor was living in a house built on the rocks easy. Water had to be carried a distance from the sandy river bed, and the cold winter winds were a major problem. Again, Jesus expounds on the difficulty of living according to the principles laid down in the Sermon on the Mount. Never did he play down the discipline required nor the persecution involved in total obedience to God.

When put to the test, the house built on the firm foundation withstood (v. 25). In like manner, the life built on obedience to Christ will withstand the storms sent its way. This life, through whatever struggles — discouragement, physical pain, loneliness, sorrow, temptation, etc. — will continue to show the power and reality of Christ. Even the ultimate storm of final judgment will be a victory for the one who has been obedient.

The foolish builder (vv. 26-27). There was another builder in the story told by Jesus. His house was perhaps very similar to the first one, at least in outward appearance. But there was one major difference: the second house was built on sand.

At first glance the river beds, particularly in the summer, offered a pleasant, smooth hollow for a building site. It was shady, with a trickling stream, and provided an easy surface on which to build. But problems arose as the winters brought the heavy rains and winds. The sand gave way, then the house would disintegrate. Maybe only once in a generation would the snows from the mountains be so heavy as to cause floods as they melted. But when they came, the building was destroyed.

Jesus is calling his listeners to a life built on obedience. It is not enough to profess Christianity. It takes more than an external appearance. The Pharisees "looked good" on the outside. Yet Christ said "unless your righteousness surpasses that... you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20). Our profession of Christianity will be tested before God. Those who have not obeyed his will in their life will be condemned.

Amazement and authority (vv. 28-29). As the Sermon on the Mount was concluded, the people were "amazed at his teaching" (v. 28). They were accustomed to listening to teachers who quoted the sayings of scholars — who spoke with little power and force. But here was a man who spoke on his own authority. He spoke as if there were a direct link between him and God.

We have not had the opportunity to look at Jesus face to face and hear this sermon as those on the mountainside did. We only have the printed words on the pages in our Bible. But even from the cold type, can we not catch a glimpse of his power and authority? This was truly a great sermon, for it is God who gave it. How will we respond? Maybe we need to evaluate the genuineness of our Christianity.

How has the Sermon on the Mount challenged you? How does your life live up to the standards given by Jesus on that mountainside?

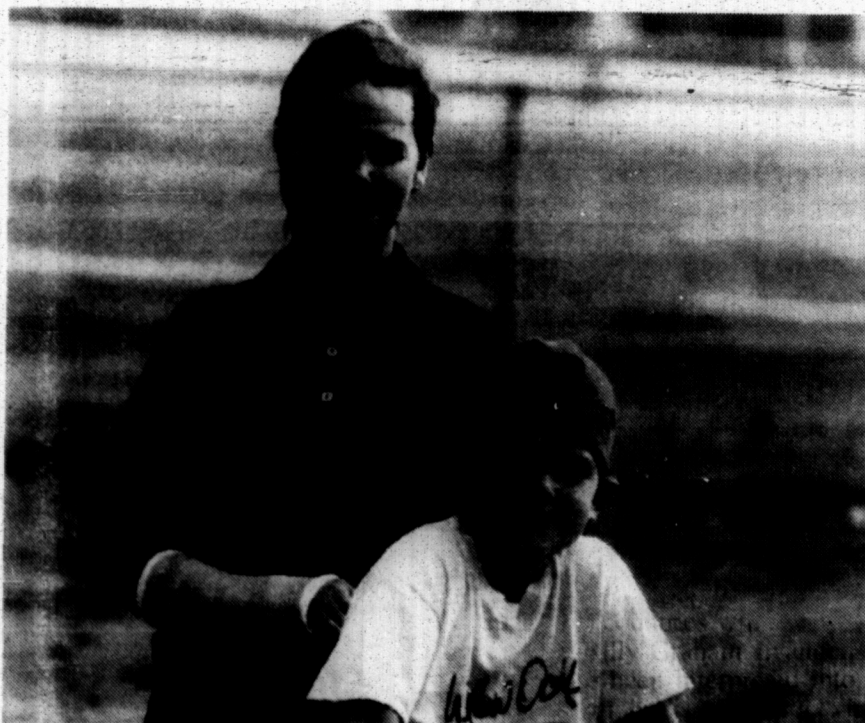
Donnell is a member of First Church, Hattiesburg.

capsules

GLOBAL EVANGELISTIC GOALS ENDORSED BY BAPTIST LEADERS: WASHINGTON (BP) — Baptist leaders on every continent have embraced the evangelistic goal of Nilson do Amaral Fanini, president of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), for each Baptist to seek to win one person to Jesus Christ and each church plant another church by the year 2000. They also promised to help in prayer and follow-up with the evangelistic meetings Fanini plans to hold for Baptists around the world, emphasizing worldwide evangelism and missions with the theme of "Jesus Christ, the Hope of the World." "As a result of the strong emphasis we Baptists have placed upon evangelism, I have been receiving invitations to preach from all around the globe," Fanini reported to the March 4-7 executive committee meeting of the Baptist World Alliance. "Baptists of the world unite; let's win the world for Jesus Christ," Fanini said when he was elected president of the Baptist World Alliance at the 17th Baptist World Congress last August in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Fanini heard leader after leader endorse this evangelistic focus for the BWA.

VIOLENCE DOWN, SEX UP, ACCORDING TO AFA: TUPELO (BP) — Recent monitoring done by American Family Association shows that television violence was down by 30% compared to six months earlier, but sex was up by 31% and profanity was up 26%. The study of prime-time programming was done from Oct. 29-Nov. 25 of last year. Benckiser (Calgon, Jovan, Stetson toiletries), MCI, Sony, and Revlon were the top sponsors of violence, sex, and profanity, according to the study. Other top sponsors included UPS, IBM, Nestle, Abbott Labs, Timex, MGM, Bayer, and Bristol-Myers Squibb. MCI and Bristol-Myers Squibb were listed on the top sponsors list six months earlier, while the other advertisers were new to the list. The monitoring showed that 94% of all prime-time programs contained violence, sex, and/or profanity. Eighty-eight percent of all sex presented on the program was depicted outside marriage. Fox led the networks with an average violence, sex, and profanity incidents at 17.57 per hour. NBC had 13.9, CBS 13.76, and ABC 7.8. Results projected over a year would have the four networks airing 16,822 sex incidents, 26,195 profanity incidents, and 9,412 violent incidents. The total combined violent, sex, and profanity incidents projected over a year of prime-time programming was 52,429. The monitoring summary is available from AFA, P.O. Drawer 2440, Tupelo, MS 38803.

GRAHAM TO BE IN MILLIONS OF HOMES WORLDWIDE: The Billy Graham World Television Series will be broadcast at prime time during the month of April to an anticipated audience of 2.5 billion people in every country of the world — bringing the gospel to more people on a single day, April 14, than on any previous day in history. Using an innovative and dramatic television format designed to appeal to today's sophisticated television audience, a special evangelistic preaching program featuring Graham will be aired over intercontinental satellite television networks in Asia and Europe — as well as on national television networks in more than 160 countries. The preaching program features appearances by Ambassador Andrew Young, Glen Campbell, and popular performers such as DC Talk and Michael W. Smith. Many countries will also air on their national television networks one of two Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) feature films, which have been interpreted into 46 languages. This is more than a television program, but is actually a "virtual worldwide crusade outreach." One million churches, which have worked with BGEA on recent evangelistic programs, have been invited to participate in this outreach by mobilizing their members to evangelize their own communities.



RECUPERATING — About seven weeks after their family suffered a head-on collision along a winding road in Peru, Nancy Watts and her younger son Joshua, 7, pose for a photograph at a Memphis park.

Prayers, God's strength sustain, missionary Nancy Watts says

MEMPHIS (BP) — A strong tide of prayer and loving support is helping Nancy Watts weather the worst storm her family has ever endured.

A head-on car wreck on a winding mountain road in Peru Feb. 1 injured Watts and her husband, Wade, and their two sons, Marcus, 9, and Joshua, 7. Seven weeks later, she and Joshua are recuperating. Marcus is fighting back from severe brain injury, while his father remains in a coma in a Memphis hospital.

"God has given me lots of strength and sustained me in ways I never thought possible," said Watts, a Memphis native and Foreign Mission Board (FMB) missionary to Peru with her husband since 1986.

"Prayer has really helped me through this whole ordeal. So many people have shown love and concern for our family. It has meant so much to know so many people have been praying for me and my family."

The need for prayer and personal support will continue for some time. Although FMB insurance will cover almost all medical expenses and the family will be put on a year's medical furlough with salary, the stresses on Nancy will be intense.

The web of concern spun around the Watts family began with Hector Benavides, pastor of Central Church in Huancayo, Peru. He was one of the first to arrive at the accident scene. While emergency crews worked with the accident victims, Benavides collected the Wattses' personal belongings, extensive because of a planned holiday they were beginning.

Word of the accident spread quickly. Missionary Dan McLaughlin telephoned mission administrator Larry Phillips, who was attending a conference in Quito, Ecuador. Phillips and his wife, Kathy, left immediately for Lima. What followed was a two-week whirlwind of activity.

Missionary colleagues rushed to Lima and Huancayo to help. The Wattses' pastor traveled 14 hours by bus to Huancayo to minister to the family. As one logistical and medical decision after another had to be made,



HANDS ON — Foreign Mission Board missionary Nancy Watts watches as a therapist at Health South rehabilitation hospital in Memphis works with her 9-year-old son Marcus. He suffered brain injury in a head-on collision along a winding road in Peru. His father Wade is still in a coma seven weeks later. (BP photos by Jim Burton)

McLaughlin and Phillips stayed in constant contact with Bill Goff, who directs the FMB's work in Spanish South America, and FMB physician Travis White. Missionaries Mike Wendell and Woody Fletcher stepped in to handle a multitude of practical and legal details.

Five days after the accident, Marcus was finally stable enough to be transported to the United States, and the mission board arranged for a medical evacuation company to airlift him to Memphis, the Watts' hometown. Nancy, who suffered fractures in her hand, face, and back, flew with him. Kathy Phillips had flown there a day earlier with Joshua, whose ankle was broken.

It would be another eight days before Wade could make the six-hour flight.

Once in Memphis, another network of Christian concern sprang into action. Members of area churches — among them Highland Heights and Grace Heights, the Watts' home churches — began to call and visit the hospitals, bringing food and offering their help. Earlier, the area churches had

raised money to send Wade's mother and brother to his bedside in Peru.

Retired Peru missionaries Marvin and Jean Fitts opened their home to Joshua and Kathy Phillips. Herschel Wells, a Brotherhood Commission staff member and longtime family friend, helped organize assistance. Bill Geiger, a retired Peru missionary now serving as a chaplain at a Memphis hospital, made pastoral visits to the family. Rick Bates, FMB family ministry director, flew to Memphis to check on the family's needs, as did Bill Goff.

"So many people are praying God's will will be done," Nancy Watts said. "Sometimes it's hard to accept what God's will might be."

"Of course, my will is that we will all get well and go back to Peru and serve the Lord as we were. But that might not be God's will. We need strength to accept his will, whatever it is."

Bibliocipher

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ZDE ERT HRSOYJTX CK ERT PSXUYCA LRQOO ZT
HQLE CDE SXEC CDETJ YQJPXTLL: ERTJT LRQOO ZT
VTTISXU QXY UXQLRSXU CK ETTER.

AQEERTV TSURE: EVTOWT

This week's clue: R equals H.

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Ezekiel Twenty: Four.

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901 COMMERCE ST STE 401
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